

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 1) In a system including at least one computer coupled through a communication medium to at least one device having at least one driver stored in memory on the device, a method of automatically loading the driver comprising the steps of:
 - a) detecting that the device is coupled to the communication medium;
 - b) determining whether the driver is stored in memory on the device; and
 - c) if the driver is suitable for usage with the computer, loading the driver from the memory on the device to the computer.
- 2) The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of prompting a user for a second driver that is suitable for usage with the computer if the driver stored in the memory was not suitable.
- 3) The method of claim 1 wherein the communication medium is a IEEE 1394 compliant bus and the device is a IEEE 1394-enabled device.
- 4) The method of claim 3 wherein the memory is a configuration read-only memory stored on the IEEE 1394-enabled device.
- 5) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 4.

6) In a system including at least one computer running an operating system and at least one device having at least one driver stored in a configuration read-only memory (CROM) on the device, the computer and device coupled through an IEEE 1394 bus, a method of automatically loading the driver comprising the steps of:

- a) the operating system on the computer detecting that the device is coupled to the bus;
- b) the operating system on the computer polling the device in order to determine whether the driver stored on the CROM in the device is suitable for operation with the operating system on the computer; and
- c) if the driver stored in the CROM is suitable, loading the driver into the operating system.

7) The method of claim 6 further comprising the step of the operating system issuing a prompt on the computer for a second driver to be loaded if the driver stored on the CROM was not suitable.

8) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 7.

9) In a system including at least a first computer running a first operating system and at least one device having at least first and second drivers stored in a non-volatile

memory on the device, the computer and device coupled through a communication bus, a method of automatically loading the drivers comprising the steps of:

- a) the first operating system on the first computer detecting that the device is coupled to the communication bus;
- b) the first operating system determining whether the memory on the device contains any said drivers for the device;
- c) the first operating system determining whether the first driver stored in the memory is suitable for use with the first operating system and the first computer;
- d) if the first driver is suitable, the first operating system loading the first driver from the memory;
- e) if the first driver is not suitable, the first operating system determining whether the second driver stored in the memory is suitable for use with the first operating system and the first computer; and
- f) if the second driver is suitable, the first operating system loading the second driver from the memory.

10) The method of claim 9 wherein the system also includes a second computer running a second operating system, the method further comprising the steps of:

- a) the second operating system on the second computer detecting that the device is coupled to the communication bus;
- b) the second operating system determining whether the memory on the device contains any said drivers for the device;

- c) the second operating system determining whether the first driver stored in the memory is suitable for use with the second operating system and the second computer;
- d) if the first driver is suitable, the second operating system loading the first driver from the memory;
- e) if the first driver is not suitable, the second operating system determining whether the second driver stored in the memory is suitable for use with the second operating system and the second computer; and
- f) if the second driver is suitable, the second operating system loading the second driver from the memory.

11) The method of claim 10 further comprising the step of the first operating system prompting a user to manually load a third driver that is suitable for usage with the first computer and the first operating system if neither the first or second drivers were suitable for usage with the first computer and the first operating system.

12) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of the second operating system prompting a user to manually load a fourth driver that is suitable for usage with the second computer and the second operating system if neither the first or second drivers were suitable for usage with the second computer and the second operating system.

13) The method of claim 12 wherein the communication bus is a IEEE 1394 compliant bus and the device is a IEEE 1394-enabled device.

14) The method of claim 13 wherein the memory is a configuration read-only memory (CROM) stored on the IEEE 1394-enabled device.

15) The method of claim 14 wherein said first driver is compiled for said first operating system and said second driver is compiled for said second operating system.

16) The method of claim 14 wherein the CROM contains at least one additional driver in addition to the first and second drivers.

17) The method of claim 16 wherein the first operating system is different than the second operating system.

18) A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing the steps recited in claim 17.

~~19)~~ A computer-readable medium having computer-executable instructions for performing steps comprising:

- running a first operating system on a first computer that is connected to a communication bus;
- detecting whether a device is connected to the communication bus;
- determining whether a non-volatile memory in the device contains a first driver that is suitable for use with the first operating system and first computer;

- d) loading the first driver if it is suitable;
- e) if the first driver is not suitable, determining whether the non-volatile memory in the device contains a second driver that is suitable for use with the first operating system and the first computer; and
- f) loading the second driver if it is suitable.

20) The computer-readable medium of claim 19 further comprising instructions for the first operating system issuing a prompt on the computer for a third driver to be loaded if the drivers stored on the non-volatile memory were not suitable.

21) The computer-readable medium of claim 20 wherein the communication bus is a IEEE 1394-compliant bus and the device is a IEEE 1394-enabled device.

22) The computer-readable medium of claim 21 wherein the non-volatile memory is a configuration read-only memory (CROM).

23) The computer-readable medium of claim 21 wherein the CROM also includes at least one uniform resource locator (URL) identifying a location where at least one current driver is stored.